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**Improving Southern California Edison's Vegetation Management Program in Los Angeles County**

Los Angeles County is home to valuable Mediterranean, coastal and mountainous ecosystems, including those found in the Santa Monica Mountains. In addition, the foothill communities of the San Gabriel Valley, nestled below the San Gabriel Mountains, are home to a variety of ecosystems that stretch across Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties. These fragile ecosystems provide valuable habitat to hundreds of different plant and animal species, many of which are considered species of concern or endangered. Through various partnerships and collaborations with state, federal and local partners, the delicate ecological balance has been able to be protected to a large extent.

Los Angeles County's Department of Regional Planning, the 3rd Supervisorial District, 5th Supervisorial District, Department of Public Works, area residents, and staff from the California Public Utility Commission (CPUC) have been in ongoing discussions with Southern California Edison (SCE) to improve SCE's vegetation management and tree trimming practices and protocols. A particular focus of these discussions has been on improving community outreach and notification, strengthening SCE's knowledge of and

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compliance with local permitting requirements, and improved compliance and customer service by SCE's crews and subcontracted companies doing vegetation work on behalf of SCE.

It is understood and imperative that this utility infrastructure be maintained in a safe manner, and that fire risk associated with this utility infrastructure be reduced to the extent possible. However, this mitigation strategy must be executed in such a way as to protect the valuable natural resources of the Santa Monica and San Gabriel Mountains.

However, despite our efforts to effectuate an enlightened outlook in the importance of these natural resources, SCE continues to execute its vegetation management and tree trimming programs in a heavy-handed, haphazard, uncoordinated and inconsistent fashion. SCE's continued disregard and lack of respect for area residents, the County's urban forest, and natural resources can no longer be tolerated. It is imperative that SCE identify and implement proactive strategies to institute proper notification and customer service to affected communities as it relates to planned and emergency vegetation management and tree trimming activities. Further, strengthened compliance with local and state programs is required to maintain safe utility infrastructure while protecting critical natural resources.

**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the Director of the Department of Regional Planning to:

1. Analyze and formally provide comment, on behalf of the County of Los Angeles, to Southern California Edison's (SCE) impending 2021 Wildfire Mitigation Plan report to the California Public Utility Commission (CPUC), specifically noting any deficiencies in compliance with local requirements or lack of appropriate protection of natural resources, and making suggestions for improvements to community engagement and outreach; and

2. Continue to engage with SCE and CPUC to monitor compliance with approved vegetation management activities, especially as it relates to notification, community outreach, and local permitting requirements, and report back to the Board of Supervisors within one year on qualitative and quantitative improvements made by SCE on their customer engagement. Further, the Department of Regional Planning should include qualitative data, including number of permits, number of trees covered by the permits, geographic areas where permits were granted under specific SCE programs, and the like.

**WE FURTHER MOVE** that the Director of the Department of Public Works and the County of Los Angeles Forester to coordinate with the Department of Regional Planning on their own tree and vegetation removal procedures to ensure consistent application of notification, community outreach and local permitting requirements, and to report back in six months on additional enhancements to existing programs to meet these expectations.